

in the army a career open to talent. The murder of Aurelian, in 275, was followed by an interregnum of seven months, during which the army seemed to repent of having slain its general and paid to the Senate a deference which effectually turned the head—never strong—of that assembly. Vopiscus quotes a letter written by one senator to another at this period, begging him to return to Rome and tear himself away from the amusements of Baiae and Puteoli. "The Senate," he says,\* "has returned to its ancient status. It is we who make Emperors; it is our order which has the distribution of offices. Come back to the city and the Senate House. Rome is flourishing; the whole State is flourishing. We give Emperors; we make Princes; and we who have begun to create, can also restrain." The pleasant delusion was soon dispelled. The legions speedily re-assumed the rôle of king-makers. Tacitus, the senatorial nominee, ruled only for a year, and another series of soldier Emperors succeeded. Probus, in six years of incessant fighting, repeated the triumphs of Aurelian, and carried his successful arms east, west, and north. Carus, despite his sixty years, crossed the Tigris "and made good — at any rate in part — his threat to render Persia as naked of trees as his own bald head was bare of hairs. But Carus's reign was brief, and at his death the Empire was divided between his two sons, Carinus and Numerian. The former was a voluptuary; the latter, a youth of retiring and scholarly disposition, quite unfitted

\* Vopiscus, Florianus, c. 6.